

REMARKS

The claims have been replaced by new claims in order to define the invention more clearly.

It is respectfully submitted that the new claims are clearly patentably distinguished from the prior art references, whether considered individually or in combination.

Brown et al., US Patent No 6732179 (referred to as '179) describes a computer system in which a client computer 112 is connected by way of a proxy server 410 to a network backbone 412. The network backbone 412 is in turn connected by way of a proxy server 414 to a number of application servers within a "walled garden" 420. The walled garden includes a VPN termination 426 which can establish a virtual private network (VPN) connection with a remote application server 436. The network backbone 412 is also connected by way of a gateway server 416 to a policy server 438.

Oehrke et al., US Patent No 6735631 (referred to as '631) describes a computer network in which a redirector is used to direct network traffic to any of two or more application processors providing the same service, so as to load balance between the available processors.

Allison et al., US Patent No 5917900 (referred to as '900) is concerned with call routing on a telephone network. Intelligent call routing (ICR) can be used to perform load balancing to route calls to a number of possible destinations according to a number of criteria including random selection, and round-robin.

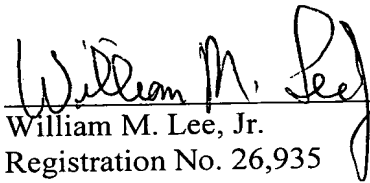
However, it is respectfully submitted that these references, individually or in combination, do not teach or suggest a computer system comprising a first node connectable to a second node by way of any of a plurality of gateway nodes, as required by the amended claims. Moreover, it is respectfully submitted that these references, individually or in combination, do not teach or suggest the first node monitoring a gateway node for failure, as required by the amended claims. Moreover, it is respectfully submitted that these references, individually or in combination, do not teach or suggest that, if the gateway node fails, the first node deletes the session key from the cache store and searches the cache store to determine whether another session key has been cached allowing a new VPN connection to be established with the

second node by way of another of the gateway nodes, as required by the amended claims. Furthermore, it is respectfully submitted that these references, individually or in combination, do not teach or suggest that, if another session key has not been cached, the first node initiates a key establishment protocol exchange with a selected one of the gateway nodes, other than the failed node, to establish a new session key allowing a new VPN connection to be established with the second node by way of said selected one of the gateway nodes, as required by the amended claims.

In summary, it is submitted that this application is now clearly in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully solicited.

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Respectfully Submitted



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